

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Central Mon Area Committee held at The Sessions House, Usk on Wednesday, 16th September, 2015 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, B. Hayward, P. Jones, V. Smith and A. Wintle

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Deb Hill-Howells	Head of Community Led Delivery
Ian Saunders	Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture
Ben Winstanley	Estates Manager
Nicola Perry	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors P. Clarke, R. Edwards, E. Hacket Pain and B. Strong

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P.R. Clarke, A. Webb, L. Hacket Pain, B. Strong and R. Edwards.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee meeting held on 10th June 2015

The minutes of the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee meeting dated 10th June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. To receive an update on the Portal Road Development

The Estates Manager attended the meeting in order to inform Members of the current position with the Portal Road Development. In doing so we noted the following points:

- The 1st phase of the site had been disposed to Premier Inn, with the planning application granted.
- There had been a delay in the development due to the Dormouse Mitigation Strategy and the translocation of Slow Worms. Countryside and Grounds Maintenance Teams were undertaking the translocation and aimed to be completed by Spring 2016, weather dependant.
- Ecologists would produce a statement to confirm completion of the translocation, which would take place following the hibernation period.
- The construction would include a 60 bed hotel and access road.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Central Mon Area Committee held at The Sessions House, Usk on Wednesday, 16th September, 2015 at 2.00 pm

- The remainder of the site, Phase 2, will be put on the market, with the requirement for coach parking to be included as a condition of the sale.
- There were positive signs that the sale of the site would proceed, but should it not proceed we were informed that no budget had been allocated for coach parking in Monmouth.

6. To receive a verbal update on Community Hubs

The Head of Community Led Delivery updated Members on the current situation with the Community Hubs. In doing so the following points were noted:

- A Manager had been appointed to the North County Community Hub.
- The Usk Hub, including the library and One Stop Shop services was now open and receiving positive feedback.
- Monmouth Hub would be relocating to Rolls Hall, with a front pedestal desk to provide OSS services. The library would be closed on Saturday 26th September to facilitate the relocation work.
- There was no progress to report regarding Abergavenny.
- It was confirmed that there would not be any cut backs on the welfare services for staff with the relocation of the Monmouth Hub.
- Usk Hub opening hours were currently under review.
- In terms of the launch of the Monmouth Hub there was no specific launch date.

Member raised the following issues:

Communication was disappointing in general. Publications could be on display around the market hall. We heard that Officers would provide further updates on the marketing and social media campaign, should they be required.

Concerns were raised regarding the length of time members of the public may need to wait to receive information, and if timings were monitored. We were advised that people were being encouraged to serve themselves where possible, but there was a system in place to monitor timings.

Following a query regarding different opening hours for different services we heard that Hubs were providing an integrated service, delivered by the same people and therefore, would provide one set of opening times. Staff were undertaking training in order to provide an efficient service in all areas.

We were informed that the alterations for the Usk Hub had been within budget and delivered on time.

New names for the Hubs were yet to be decided, and suggestions were welcomed.

7. To receive an update on the effects of the Velothon on Monmouthshire

The Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture provided a brief update on the Velothon, explaining that there would be a seminar for Members on Tuesday 22nd September 2015 to provide further information.

Feedback had shown that the Velothon had been a great event, bringing many people into the region. Welsh Government had signed a 4 year contract to deliver 4 velothons. Chief Executive proposals would need to be adhered to before agreeing to the next event.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Central Mon Area Committee held at The Sessions House, Usk on Wednesday, 16th September, 2015 at 2.00 pm

Following a debrief, the complaints heard in Monmouthshire had been echoed across South East Wales, and shortcomings had been identified as:

- Earlier finalisation of routes
- Integrated response from agencies
- Defined spectator areas
- Sabotage issues

We heard that 20,000 cyclists had already signed up for 2016, an 8,000 increase on 2015. The date may be moved to earlier in the year to facilitate professional cyclists.

It was agreed, going forward, the following should be in place:

- Declaration of route and road closures
- Compensatory agreements
- Guarantees of impact on communities
- Assurance that there would be no cost to MCC

8. To receive an update on the pinch points on Monnow Street

Members received an email update from the Highways Senior Engineer regarding the Monnow Street pinch point trial.

We were informed that the trial was due to start in October 2015, and would be carried out for a month, in order to provide safer facilities for pedestrians.

The footways on Monnow Street between Agincourt Square and St. John Street would be widened, thus creating a narrower carriageway wide enough to accommodate one vehicle.

The trial would commence following resurfacing works in the town and would be monitored by council officers before recommending whether the arrangement would be made permanent.

Members expressed appreciation for the update but were disappointed not to be able to speak to the relevant officers in person.

Concerns were raised regarding the ongoing cutbacks within the council and the effect on the capacity of the Highways department.

Members referred to the lack of response to queries from the Highways Department and requested that officers respond in accordance with Council guidelines.

9. To receive an update on Monmouth School

The Chair informed the Committee of an email update received from the 21st Century Schools Manager. The following points were highlighted:

- The enabling works are due to commence in October 2015. The enabling works will include forming contractor's compounds, and installation of temporary buildings.
- The main contractor will leaflet all the surrounding houses to introduce themselves and give a brief outline of what they will be doing. A contact for queries will be identified within the contractor's organisation. The school will not be the point of contact.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Central Mon Area Committee held at The Sessions House, Usk on Wednesday, 16th September, 2015 at 2.00 pm

- In February 2016 the school will decant into the temporary buildings, and the site will be fenced off ready for demolition of the old buildings.
- The buildings will be dismantled on site and building material will be crushed as hardcore for the new building. Other materials will be taken off site and recycled.
- The pool is due to close at the end of 2015 and will require decommissioning.
- Phase 2 demolition will include buildings of a larger nature but will not take place for another 2 years.
- Holding areas are to be established to ensure there will not be a large queue of vehicles.
- There will be cleaning bays on site to make sure mud is not transferred onto main roads and pathways.

10. To discuss future agenda items for the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee.

The following suggestions were made for future agenda items:

- Safety issues of Usk Bridge – invite the Transport and Planning Policy Officer
- Air quality in Usk
- Traffic issues at Wye Bridge, Monmouthshire County Council
- Monmouth School update – request 21st Century Schools Manager attend
- Policer officer be invited to respond to questions
- Feedback on Hubs
- Update from the Whole Place Officer

11. To note that the next meeting of the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee will be held on Wednesday 27th January 2016 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 3.10pm